Ex-JFK Aide Disputes 'Single Bullet' Theory

By Andrew J. Glass
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A former White House press aide said last night that the Warren Commission erred in concluding that the same assassin's bullet struck President Kennedy and then wounded Texas Gov. John Connally.

Malcolm M. Kilduff, who rode in the fourth car behind John F. Kennedy in Dallas three years ago, reported in a taped television interview that parts of the disputed bullet are still in Connally's leg.

The Commission, however, exhibited a nearly perfect bullet without any missing fragments. It said that the bullet from Lee Harvey Oswald's rifle struck the President in the back of the neck, exited through his throat and then plowed on through the Governor's torso, finally lodging in his left thigh.

After the television interview for Westinghouse Broadcasting Co., Kilduff said a former member of the Governor's staff told him bullet fragments remain lodged in Connally's right calf.

The so-called "single-bullet theory" is at the heart of the Commission's finding that Oswald acted alone in killing the President on Nov. 22, 1963. A second bullet, according to the Commission, hit the President in the head and killed him. Another bullet missed the car entirely and was never found.

Films of the assassination indicate that a maximum of only 1.8 seconds could have elapsed between the time that the President was first struck and the time that Connally was wounded.

Since Oswald's bolt-action rifle could not be fired any faster than once every 2.3 seconds, it could not have possibly been fired twice during the time in which the film indicates both men were hit.

Such critics of the Commission's work as Edward Jay Epstein, the author of "Inquest," maintain that if both men were not hit by the same bullet—as Connally and Kilduff claim—then there must have been two assassins.

But, in the interview, Kilduff dismissed as "pure garbage" published theories that question the Commission's basic conclusion that Oswald alone killed Kennedy.

Kilduff, who flew back to Washington aboard Air Force One with President Johnson and the Late President's body, also said in the interview that "things . . . happened" on the plane "that could be embarraising to both the Kennedys and to the Johnsons." He declined to elaborate.

"I think," Kilduff added, "some of the old 1960 wounds were reopened, rehashed, thought about, and again I say that this is as a direct result of, if you will, the intense emotional feeling at the time."

In April, 1964, Kilduff discussed these events candidly with William Manchester, author of "The Death of the President," which was written with the full cooperation of the Kennedy family.

The Manchester book is scheduled to be published next spring. Kilduff, however, cited an agreement between Manchester and the Kennedy family stating that the book shall not be published before Nov. 22, 1968, unless Mrs. John F. Kennedy designates a prior date.

"I have reason to know that Mrs. Kennedy has at no time given either oral or written permission for publication of the book . . . prior to Nov. 22, 1968," Kilduff continued. . . . No matter how you cut the mustard, it still turns out that he is violating the basic agreement that he signed."

Manchester was traveling in Europe and unavailable for comment. But his literary agent, Donald Congdon, told The Washington Post that he had a telegram from Sen. Robert F. Kennedy (D-N.Y.) releasing Manchester from the 1968 date.

Through a spokesman, the Senator declined to comment on Cogdon's report.

While Kenendy's dealing with the Manchester book remained clouded, the Senator is known to be worried that pubilcation of the book before the 1968 elections could prove damaging to President Johnson and make Kennedy's relations with the White House more difficult.